

The VGP News



Photo: Bruce Doe, 11721 1st River Road, Reston, VA 22091 (telephone 703-860-1170, after 5:30 p.m.).

A Relation Among Geomagnetic Reversals, Seafloor Spreading Rate, Paleoclimate, and Black Shales

Earl R. Force

The Mesozoic Cenozoic histories of reversals in the earth's magnetic field and of periods of widespread anoxia in the ocean basins show a remarkable correlation (Figure 1). Periods of black shale deposition ("anoxic events") occur during lengthy periods without magnetic reversals ("quiet" periods). The anoxia of the Paleozoic is proposed and some implications for mineral resources noted.

Men Zou et al. (1982) noted an empirical link, based on both the Jurassic and Cretaceous quiet zones, between fast seafloor spreading and stable magnetic polarity. They suggested that equipping heat plumes couple activity of the outer core and inner mantle. The relationship between magnetic polarity and spreading rate is seen at several spreading centers (Figure 1).

The link between fast spreading and transgression is well established (Hay and Pitman, 1973). Because most generated oceanic crust cools and subsides as a function of time regardless of spreading rate, fast-spreading centers have a broad cross section (Figure 2). An increase in spreading rate thus displaces water onto continental shelves and into epicontinental basins. Cretaceous high sea levels observed in western North America correspond to times of fast spreading (Hay and Pitman, 1973; Loh et al., 1977).

Calculation of the earth's albedo in the Cretaceous took into account their correct position for the time shown that high sea levels and consequent larger oceans resulted in a significant albedo decrease (Barnett et al., 1980). More solar energy was absorbed. However, estimates of the magnitude of warming are not yet possible because feedback factors such as cloudiness are poorly understood.

Further atmospheric CO₂ contents due to increased volcanic activity during times of fast spreading (Hesse et al., 1983) reinforced this effect. Warmer paleoclimates have long been observed from fossil assemblages and oxygen-isotope measurements (Figure 1) for roughly the Apurimac-Campanian (mid-Late Cretaceous) and the Middle to Late Jurassic (Douglas and Savin, 1975; Finken, 1979; Savin, 1977).

A decrease in the surface-temperature gradients from pole to equator is also observed by these authors from these time periods, i.e., the temperature increase near the pole was greater than that near the equator. These

gradients are lower during warm periods because polar ice caps with high albedo retreat and because poleward transport of the latent heat of evaporated water increases (Mann and Wetherald, 1980; Kellogg, 1979).

A link between low temperature gradients and ocean stagnation was proposed (Schlanger and Jenkinson, 1979; Fischer and Arthur, 1977) partly because of coincident timing of widespread black-shale deposition (anoxic events) and periods of equable climate. Compare the situation today with that in the Cretaceous: today's high temperature gradients (and some generation of saline waters by incongruent freezing) raise high density gradients in seawater and drive vigorous bottom currents from the poles. These currents today prevent significant ocean stratification; ocean-wide anoxia of strong oxygen-minimum form only where bottom currents are weak, e.g., in the north Pacific (Dunstan and Moore, 1980). In the Jurassic and Cretaceous, low temperature gradients must have resulted in weaker bottom currents (though probably not in weaker surface and atmospheric circulation (Barron and Washington, 1982)). Bottom waters may have been generated in sub-tropical evaporative basins (Thirion and Berger, 1979). Strong oxygen-minimum zones became widespread. Intersection of oxygen-minimum zones with ocean floors are the sites of black shales deposited in Deep Sea Drilling Project (DSDP) holes and sections now on land (Figure 2); locally, black shales formed in silled basins also (Thirion and Berger, 1979). The timing of black-shale deposition is shown as anoxic periods on Figure 1.

Periods of widespread anoxia are of enormous importance because the organic precursors of petroleum were preserved in sediments (Arthur and Schlanger, 1979). These periods also saw formation or preservation of some metal deposits (Cannon and Force, 1983; Force et al., 1983), due to strong solubility contrasts between anoxic and oxygenated water. For example, massive polymetallic sulfides that formed on ocean floors during anoxic periods have probably been selectively preserved (Figure 2).

Other authors have assembled some of the same links to form other models (e.g., Roth, 1983). The model most similar to the one in this paper is Finken (1981) and Sheridan (1983).

Genetically related events should be similar spaced in time, and this spacing has not been shown yet across the spectrum of linkages proposed here. Mesozoic changes of spreading rate are presently documented only over time periods of about 10–20 m.y., whereas anoxic periods and their associated sea level fluctuations (third-order fluctuations of Loh et al., 1977) occupy 3–10 m.y. (Figure 1). Currently available spreading-rate histories for the Mesozoic are very crude, however. In order to see whether hidden changes in spreading rate could plausibly result in observed 3–10 m.y. fluctuations, I calculated "backward" to determine a spreading-rate increase which could result in a sea level rise of 100 m in 5 m.y. Present total length of ridges (58,750 km), cylindrical ocean basins, and present areas of oceans and of land areas (0–100 m in elevation were assumed. The increase required is about 2.1 cm per year half rate for all ridges, or about 12–70% of observed average spreading rates for ridges listed by Hays and Pitman (1973) for the Cretaceous magnetic quiet interval. This rate seems possible, and therefore changes in spreading rate might indeed cause 3–10 m.y. sea-level fluctuations. The question of regression level was not addressed. Schlanger et al. (1981) record midplate seafloor volcanism and raised seafloors from the Cretaceous; these factors (and ridge profliteration) are probably related to spreading rate changes, and potentially lessen the magnitude of increased spreading rate needed to produce transgression.

With oriented DSDP cores, testing of this hypothesis by remaking the sequence of events within single cores should be possible. Onset of anoxic bottom conditions should not precede magnetically quiet intervals (unless the model is backward!).

If this hypothesis has genetic significance, it should hold regardless of when the specified conditions occurred. Periods of widespread anoxia have been proposed for the Paleozoic, from black shale sections on land and in the ocean (e.g., 1980). These sections should not contain magnetic reversals in those portions showing carbon-isotope records of open-ocean anoxia. Numerous other tests of the model would see how well one factor predicts another; if results are positive, some of these tests could develop into mineral-exploration techniques (for example, a link between magnetic polarity and some sedimentary minerals).

Many of the linkages proposed here are matters of dispute or incomplete work, so errors in my depiction are likely. Nevertheless, the accord with observed features of earth history across the entire spectrum of linkages, magnetic reversals and anoxic periods are indications that the general form of the hypothesis is correct. Also, a connection exists between processes in the earth's interior

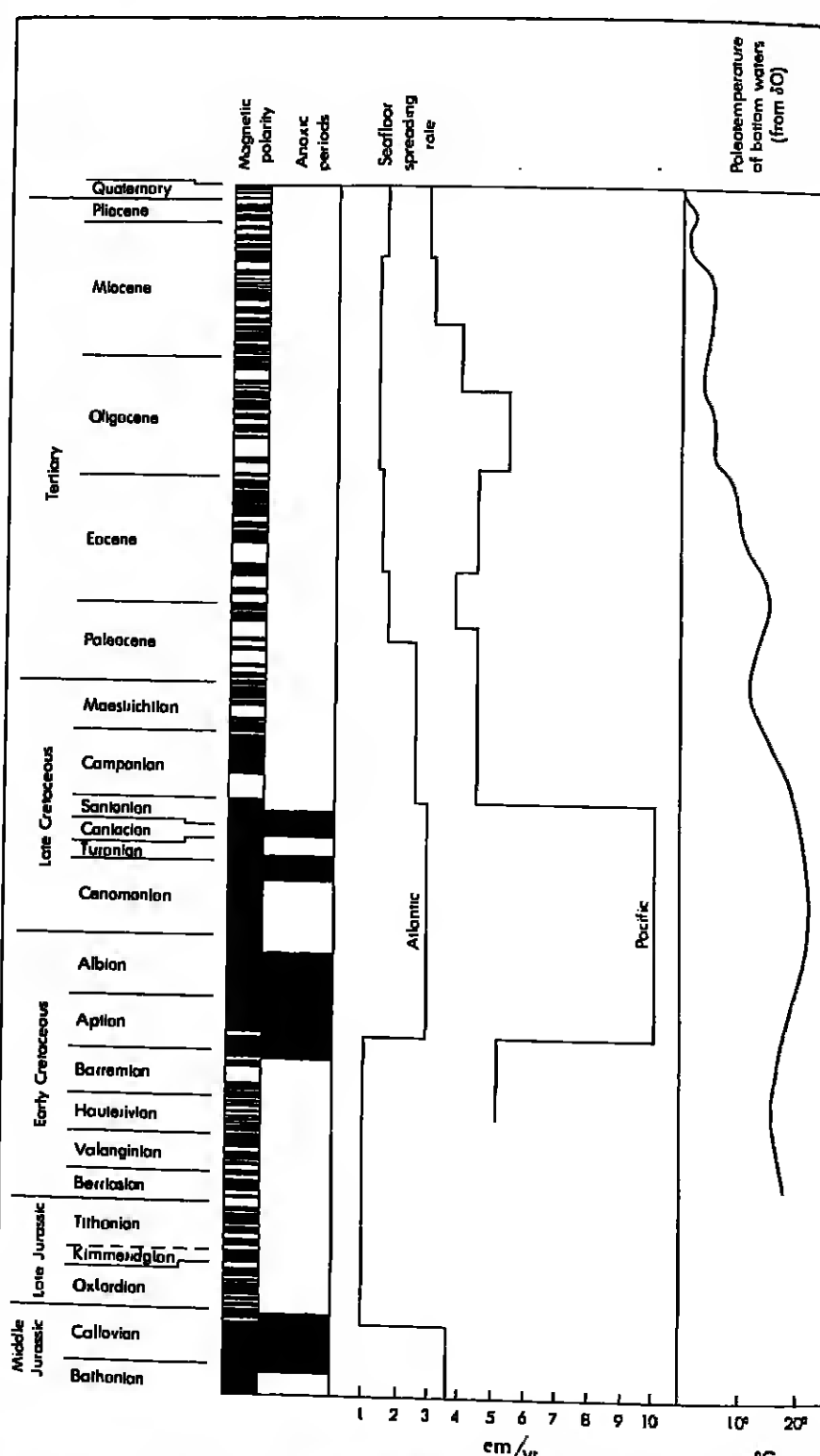


Fig. 1. Comparison of magnetic polarity time scale (Larson et al., 1982) with periods of widespread anoxia (Arthur, 1979), average half-rates of sea floor spreading (simplified from Larson and Pitman [1972]; and Sheridan et al., [1982]) and oxygen isotope-derived bottom paleotemperatures from the north Pacific (Douglas and Savin, 1975). The presence of all the chronologies in a single data set (cores of the DSDP), minimizes systematic offsets, but detailed correlation is still a problem.

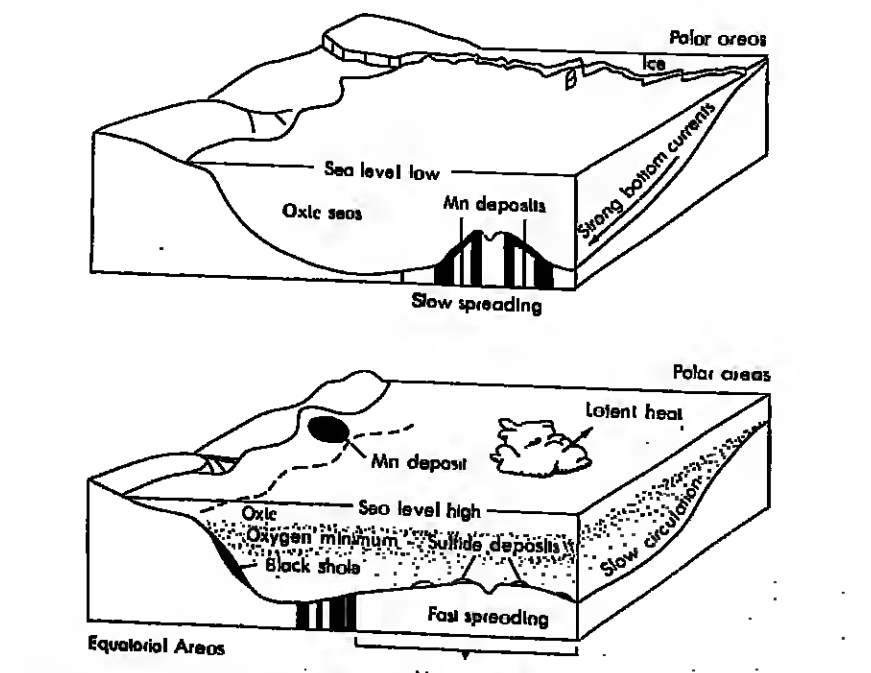


Fig. 2. Cartoon contrasting (top) state of rapid magnetic reversals, slow spreading, low sea level, cold high-gradient climate and oceanic crust (icehouse state of Fischer [1981]) and (bottom) state of magnetic quiet, fast spreading, high sea level, warm low-gradient climate and dysoxic oceans (greenhouse state). Degree of oxygen depletion proportional to stippling; oxygen minimum zones would intersect only seamounts, plateaus, and basin margins in the deeper Pacific.

which produce its magnetic field and climatic response at its surface.

I am indebted to W. F. Cannon, R. P. Sheldon, Louis Nicolaev and others for discussions on the form of linkages and to L. W. Snee and Lisa M. Pratt for help in formulating the Paleozoic test. Suggestions by participants in the 1983 Penrose Conference "Cretaceous Climate" are appreciated.

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Meetings

Water in Silicate Melts

Water is one of the more important volatile species in magmas, both in terms of its abundance and its influence on the properties of a given magma. Many workers in the geological sciences have measured, modeled, and speculated on the interaction of water with silicate melts as a function of pressure. At the same time, glass and materials scientists have collected a considerable body of data on the effect of water on the properties of liquid and glassy silicates at 1 atmosphere in "Sol-N-M" and below. A special session on "Solubility and Transport Properties of Water in Silicate Melts" was held during the 1983 AGU Spring Meeting, May 30–June 3, in Baltimore. The session had three main objectives: (1) review the present data base and discuss the status of current models in order to identify areas where further work is needed; (2) introduce interested geologists to the large body of work being carried out in the glass and materials sciences; and (3) consider glass properties such as thermodynamic relationships, structure of liquid and solid, and dynamic properties including diffusion and viscosity. This report summarizes the major topics discussed. More detailed information may be found in the published abstracts (Eos, May 8, 1983, pp. 338–343).

The session opened with two papers setting

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of their recent studies on diffusion of water in obsidian. Observed variations in the diffusion coefficient with temperature and composition were summarized and current models for the "water" diffusion mechanism were discussed. Lapham noted no pressure dependence of the diffusion coefficient in her obsidian study, in contrast to that observed by M. Tomozawa. This difference may be partly due to the higher pressures and temperatures involved in the obsidian runs and perhaps the hydrous nature of these latter experiments.

T. M. Harrison and E. B. Watson discussed the effect of water content on the diffusion of zirconium in granitic melt. They found a large increase in diffusivity and solubility at higher water contents and discussed the effect of this on zircon dissolution kinetics in hydrous granitic magmas.

The afternoon poster session included a number of presentations directly related to the discussions in the morning.

From informal discussions before, during, and after the meeting, we feel that the following general conclusions may be drawn. First, there are relatively few published estimates for water contents of primary igneous magmas, and more solubility data are necessary for synthetic and natural compositions at both high and low pressures. Likewise, diffusion data as a function of pressure, temperature, and composition are scant. Especially more experiments are needed. Second, empirical modeling of thermodynamic and dynamic properties is a useful and necessary field, especially for those interested mainly in calculation of the effect of water on bulk properties. At the same time, mechanistic studies at the molecular level will lead to a better understanding of water-melt interactions at the microscopic level. More spectroscopic studies are needed on hydrous glasses, and especially on hydrous melts at pressure and temperature. We feel that both empirical modeling and structural studies are worthwhile and should be pursued with a much interplay between the two approaches as possible.

Four papers examined the diffusion of water in hydrous glasses and melts and the effect of water on diffusion of other species. M. Tomozawa described the importance of water in the glass releases and then presented the results of several studies of water diffusion in silicate glasses. One interesting result was the large observed dependency of the diffusion coefficient on the stress regime in nonhydrous glasses.

Two papers by K. Lapham and J. Karsten reviewed water diffusion studies in silicate melts and glasses and presented some results

This meeting report was prepared by Paul McMillan, who is with the Department of Chemistry, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287 and Edward Slinger, who is with the Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA 91109.

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Books

Geophysics in the Affairs of Man: A Personalized History of Exploration Geophysics and its Allied Sciences of Seismology and Oceanography

L. F. Bates, L. F. Gaskill, and R. B. Rice, Perinagon, Oxford, xv + 492 pp., 1982, \$25.

Reviewed by Carl Kinsinger

This book traces the development of the applications of the geophysical sciences to a variety of societal needs from their beginnings to now, with emphasis on the "golden age" of the 1940s through the 1960s. The phrase "industrial geophysics" is often taken as synonymous with "geophysical exploration" that the broader viewpoint of this work is especially welcome. The authors retain a distorted much of the history of exploration geophysics, as is appropriate in view of the large commitment of human and financial resources to this endeavor and the practical importance of the results. However, they have also included interesting sketches of military applications of geophysical techniques and the important technological advances that have come from them, as well as much information on ocean science. Atmospheric and space science receive less detailed treatment.

The opening chapter, historical background to the developments of the 20th century, is brief, incomplete, and uneven in its coverage. An adequate treatment could well have doubled the size of the book, but some landmark developments that I looked for are missing. The heart of the book is the detailed story of each of the major themes: exploration, ocean science, global seismology from the end of World War I through the 1960s. The story is told in terms of the personalities who built the subjects and the events that shaped their progress. It was this interest in these people and their progress that I found most interesting. This is a humanized history of the geophysical sciences that have moved geophysics ahead, the technical developments along the way, and the impact of the creative minds responsible for progress.

The chapters of seismic exploration for oil are explored, with emphasis on developments in the United States but with a few mentions of European contributions. Gravity and magnetic methods are treated in less detail. The

parallel growth of earthquake seismology and oceanography in the 1930s is presented in terms of the leaders who emerged and the institutions that nurtured the efforts.

The enormous impact of World War II on scientific and technological developments important to geophysics follows. The progress in all areas in the postwar period is highlighted by the story of Project Vela-Uniform, the search for methods to monitor underground nuclear tests that jerked seismology into the modern era within a few years, beginning in 1959. The continuation of this effort to the present is a theme through the rest of the book. Progress and the new leadership that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s are not treated in any detail. The commercial aspects of exploration geophysics, a big business indeed, are also explored in a personalized way through the stories of a number of the companies, large and small.

The tale rambles a bit along the way and the authors get interested in great detail in places where they are talking about topics with which they have been closely associated. As a reader who cannot ignore a footnote, I found the flow of the text interrupted continually by the need to drop to the bottom of the page for the ancillary information referred to. I was amused by the penchant for military titles throughout (Rear Admiral Lloyd H. Brown, USNR; Lieutenant "Jimmy" Carter, USN [retired]).

I liked very much the personal evaluations by a number of well-known geophysicists of their own achievements and experience. The book chews with this section, which it should help remind today's students that the advancement of science, including triumphs and blunders, results from the efforts of people very much like themselves.

The authors have some strong prejudices that come through clearly in places. They don't like "environmentalists" and they take a dim view of a variety of national social programs of the recent past, including affirmative action in its various forms. I think that the kind of sarcasm aimed at the environmental movement in the first part of chapter 7 has an effect similar to that of James Watt: The true believers perceive the need to wield the vagueness more closely and dig in deeper. The authors do mention some of the outstanding women and minority group members who have been leaders in the field, but the list remains that the number of such people is very small. I think that as a history of applied geophysics, the book would have been better without these elements, but here our own prejudices are doing clearly.

The book is a useful source of background on people and events that stimulated the growth of important parts of the geophysical sciences. It is especially important because it reminds us of the long-term effects on whole areas of human endeavor of isolated and apparently unrelated events.

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New Publications

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Alt-Sex Exchange of Crates and Porticles, P. S. Liss and W. G. N. Slinn (Eds.), D. Riedel, Boston, xiii + 561 pp., 1983, \$69.50.

Changing Climate: Report of the Carbon Dioxide Assessment Committee, Board on Atmospheric Sciences and Climate, Commission on Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Resources, National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington, D. C., 1983, \$29.95.

Deformation Measurements, J. Joo and A. Derreol (Eds.), Akademiai Kiado, Budapest, xxii + 900 pp., 1983, \$50.

Earthquakes, Tides, Unidentified Sounds, and Related Phenomena: A Catalog of Geophysical Anomalies, Compiled by W. R. Colless, The Science Book Project, Glen Arno, Md., 1983, \$12.95.

Earthquakes, Volcanoes, and Tsunamis: An Anatomy of Hazards, K. V. Steinbrugge (Ed.), Skandia Corp., xv + 392 pp., 1982, \$35.

Edges in Marine Science, A. R. Robinson (Ed.), Springer-Verlag, New York, xxv + 609 pp., 1983, \$45.

Exploitation, Nonagriculture, and Natural Waters, 2 vols., R. M. Pytkowicz (Ed.), John Wiley, New York, vol. 1, xv + 351 pp.; vol. 2, xv + 353 pp., 1983, \$49.95 each.

Growth and Biogeochemistry of the Earth's Crust, G. H. Miller, Syoset, New York, xii + 400 pp., 1983, \$16.

Hydrology, Fracturing and Geothermal Energy, S. Neuman-Nasser, H. Abe, S. Hirakawa (Eds.), Martinus Nijhoff, Boston, xi + 528 pp., 1983, \$78.50.

Ice Core Samples from Greenland and Antarctica, Ice Core Sample Facility and Information Exchange, SUNY Buffalo, New York, 49 pp., 1983, \$10.

Don Safety Research Coordination Conference, Research Subcommittee of Interagency Committee on Dam Safety, Washington, D. C., 1983.

Committee on Dam Safety, Washington, D. C., 1983.

The International Field Year for the Great Lakes, E. J. Aubert and T. L. Richards (Eds.), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Ann Arbor, xi + 411 pp., 1983.

It Began with a Star: A History of Geology from the Stone Age to the Age of Plate Tectonics, H. Faul and C. Faul (Eds.), John Wiley, New York, xvii + 271 pp., 1983, \$38.95.

Kinetics and Equilibrium in Mineral Reactions, S. K. Saxena (Ed.), Springer-Verlag, New York, x + 273 pp., 1983, \$39.80.

The Major Biogeochemical Cycles and Their Interactions, D. Bolin and R. B. Cook (Eds.), John Wiley, New York, xxi + 532 pp., 1983, \$74.95.

Man, A Geomorphological Agent: An Introduction to Anthropogenic Geomorphology, D. Ahlborn (Ed.), D. Riedel, Boston, xxi + 105 pp., 1983, \$45.50.

Metal Pollution in the Aquatic Environment, U. Forstner and G. T. W. Wimmer (Eds.), Springer-Verlag, New York, 1983, \$29.

The Phanerozoic Geology of the World, M. Moutade and A. E. M. Naftin (Eds.), Elsevier, New York, x + 450 pp., 1983, \$12.75.

The Physics and Chemistry of Color: The Fifteen Causes of Color, John Wiley, New York, xx + 454 pp., 1983, \$43.95.

Practical Sedimentology, D. W. Lewis, Hutchinson Ross, Stroudsburg, Pa., xi + 229 pp., 1981.

Principles of Aquatic Chemistry, F. M. M. Morel, John Wiley, New York, ix + 446 pp., 1983, \$49.95.

Social Science Research and Climate Change: An Interdisciplinary Approach, R. S. Choe, E. Rouding, S. H. Schneider (Eds.), D. Riedel, Boston, xiii + 255 pp., 1983, \$43.50.

Solar-Terrestrial Physics: Principles and Theoretical Foundations, R. L. Carovillano and J. M. Forbes (Eds.), D. Riedel, Boston, xvii + 838 pp., 1983, \$155.

Statistical Methods in Geology for Field and Lab Decisions, R. F. Cleeve, George Allen & Unwin, Boston, xvi + 169 pp., 1983, \$23.

Terrigenous Clastic Depositional Systems: Applications to Petroleum, Coal, and Uranium Exploration, W. E. Galloway and D. R. Holdard (Eds.), Springer-Verlag, New York, xv + 425 pp., 1983, \$39.

The Thunderstorm in Human Affairs, E. Kessler (Ed.), University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1983, \$24.95.

Topics in Ocean Physics, Proceedings of the International School of Physics "Enrico Fermi," Course 80, Italian Physical Society, A. R. Osborne and P. M. Rizoli (Eds.), North-Holland, New York, xv + 550 pp., 1982, \$100.75.

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Center for Ocean-Land-Atmosphere Interactions: Department of Meteorology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD. The Department of Meteorology is seeking applications for a full-time faculty position in the Center for Ocean-Land-Atmosphere Interactions. The position will include maintenance, calibration and use of a new, computer-automated digital X-ray diffractometer, and maintenance and repair of other laboratory equipment. The position is in the Center for Ocean-Land-Atmosphere Interactions. The successful candidate will be expected to teach geophysics and supervise graduate students. Salary and rank are open, depending upon qualifications. Applicants should submit a resume and statement of teaching and research interests directly and arrange to have at least 3 letters of recommendation sent to Robert C. Morris, Department of Meteorology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

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